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*Published in:*  
European Foreign Affairs Review

**IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.**

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2019

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Boers, E., & Higgott, R. (2019). Rhythms of soft power influence and transatlantic higher education relations. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 24, 119-136.

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# Rhythms of Soft Power Influence and Transatlantic Higher Education Relations<sup>★</sup>

Richard HIGGOTT<sup>★★</sup> & Elke BOERS<sup>★★</sup>

*This article looks at transatlantic educational relations as an element of cultural relations more generally. It begins by locating higher education within the context of EU cultural diplomacy (CD) and soft power and in a comparative transatlantic context. Based on a study of key historical components in the transatlantic relationship and dialogue in higher education, it then shows how higher education relations across the Atlantic are subject to what we describe as the 'rhythms of soft power'. The article concludes that while CD in general, and higher education relations as a component of soft power in particular, might try to assist in the mitigation of prevailing politico-security and economic dynamics, it is going to be an uphill battle in an era in which we are witnessing at best a crisis and at worst the pending collapse of the liberal international order.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This article looks at the relationship between soft power and diplomacy in a transatlantic setting from the perspective of Higher Education (HE) relations. It addresses a set of questions that are of immediate policy relevance in an era when: (1) the endurance of US soft power in recent years and its influence in Europe since the election of Donald Trump, is increasingly questioned and (2) the EU Global Strategy<sup>1</sup> argues that the EU, while experiencing a period of existential crisis, nevertheless needs to enhance its standing as an global actor in part via an upgrading of its CD. Both assumptions cast large policy shadows over the utility of soft power and the state of the transatlantic relationship in higher education.

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<sup>★</sup> This article is part of a project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 693799. This work reflects only the authors' views, and the Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

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<sup>1</sup> EU, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (June 2016), [https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/pages/files/eugs\\_review\\_web\\_13.pdf](https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/pages/files/eugs_review_web_13.pdf) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

The article is divided into four parts. In part one we locate HE within the context of EU CD and soft power in a comparative transatlantic context. Part two identifies key historical components in the transatlantic relationship and dialogue in HE in the wider context of Joseph Nye's concept of *soft power*.<sup>2</sup> Part three argues that HE relations across the Atlantic (noted down as 'Transatlantica' by Schunz et al.<sup>3</sup>) are subject to what we describe as the rhythms of soft power, subject to the wider effects of an ever-changing foreign policy environment more generally. Soft power and HE relations, we argue, effectively mirror the ebb and flow of the standing of the US in global affairs. Rhythms could just as easily be described as 'stages'<sup>4</sup> that seem to repeat themselves in a manner that reflects the foreign policy temper of the times. We demonstrate that these rhythms have driven discussion of transatlantic HE over time. On the basis of our analysis we have raised the question of the degree to which declining soft power (and especially the recent rise of populism and potential anti-Americanism) might be an explanation of diminishing transatlantic HE flows – especially when it comes to continental European students studying in the US.

In part four we look at the HE relationship in a contemporary context to show how transatlantic relations in HE appear to be impacted by the current challenges of populism and nationalism as US soft power in its relationship with the EU seems to be diminishing. While both nationalist and populist tendencies have been visible across the Atlantic over the last few years, it is the impact of US standing in international relations as evinced through the increasingly negative responses to the foreign policy of the current US administration on transatlantic relations that are salient for this article. It is clear that US foreign policy under the Trump administration, if not diminishing the transatlantic relationships importance for its European partners, is making it a more difficult relationship to manage in what we might call the traditional soft power policy areas such as HE. As part four demonstrates, HE cannot be divorced from this wider context.

As a consequence, the article concludes that while CD in general, and HE relations as a component of soft power in particular, might try to assist in the mitigation of prevailing politico-security and economic dynamics, it is going to be an uphill battle in an era in which we are witnessing at best a crisis<sup>5</sup> and at worst

<sup>2</sup> J. Nye, *Soft Power* (Public Affairs 2004).

<sup>3</sup> S. Schunz, G. Scott-Smith & L. Van Langenhove, *Broadening Soft Power in EU-US Relations*, 3–20.

<sup>4</sup> See G. Scott-Smith, *The Ties that Bind: Dutch-American Relations, US Public Diplomacy and the Promotion of American Studies Since the Second World War*, 2 Hague J. Dipl. 283–305 (2007).

<sup>5</sup> N. Ferguson & Z. Fareed, *The End of the Liberal Order* (One World Publishers 2017); J. Ikenberry, *The Plot Against American Foreign Policy: Can the Liberal Order Survive?*, 96(3) *Foreign Affairs* 2–10 (2017); J. Ikenberry, *The End of the Liberal International Order?*, 94(1) *Int'l Affairs* 7–23 (2018).

the pending collapse<sup>6</sup> of the liberal international order that was underwritten for much of the last seventy years by the US acting as a 'self-binding hegemon'.<sup>7</sup>

The article will locate contemporary transatlantic HE relations in this wider context that has major implications for assumptions we make about cultural relations, soft power and higher education particularly. Collaborative sloganeering and practices (Trump's 'America First' approach) have damaged the US image abroad and by extension its soft power.<sup>8</sup> At best, the attractiveness of the US as a place to study or to partner with for research will be placed under great stress under these conditions. At worst it could well kindle a resurgence of anti-Americanism. Even with the eventual passing of Donald Trump, it will prove very difficult to squeeze the populist genie back into the bottle. The article will analyse these trends, and especially the impact on transatlantic HE relations of the decline in trust that currently afflicts the US as a global actor.

## 2 THE PLACE OF HIGHER EDUCATION WITHIN SOFT POWER AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Soft power is ubiquitous nowadays. It entails getting outcomes one wants without actually engaging in material means (force or economics): influence and attraction are its core operating concepts. 'Attractive power' is meant to persuade without threat-making. Soft power identifies the values and policies to use in attracting others. Therefore, it relies upon the existence of willing receivers, who see the benefits of cooperation.<sup>9</sup> Culture is an inseparable part of soft power. Together with 'political values' and 'policies', culture is identified as one of the biggest categories to enhance the soft power of a country. In the Portland Soft Power Ranking, both culture and education are listed as two of the six objective categories that positively influence soft power.<sup>10</sup> These aspects are part of the 'glue' that should hold 'Transatlantica' together.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> R. Higgott, *Globalism, Populism and the Limits to Global Economic Governance*, 1(1) J. Inter-Regional Stud. 2–23 (2018); R. Kagan, *The Twilight of the Liberal Order* (24 Jan. 2017), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-twilight-of-the-liberal-world-order/> (accessed 2018); R. Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back* (Alfred A. Knopf 2017); E. Luce, *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* (Little Brown 2017).

<sup>7</sup> L. Martin, *Self-Binding: How America Benefitted from Multilateralism*, Harvard Magazine (Sept.–Oct. 2004), <https://harvardmagazine.com/2004/09/self-binding.html> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>8</sup> See Pew Research Center, *US Image Suffers as Publics Around the World Question Trumps Leadership* (23 June 2017), [http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-image-suffers-as-publics-around-world-question-trumps-leadership/pg\\_2017-06-26-us\\_image-01-5/](http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-image-suffers-as-publics-around-world-question-trumps-leadership/pg_2017-06-26-us_image-01-5/) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>9</sup> J. Nye, *Soft Power* (Public Affairs 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Portland, *The Soft Power 30, a Global Ranking of Soft Power 2017*, <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2017-Web-1.pdf> (accessed 3 June 2018).

<sup>11</sup> Schunz, Scott-Smith & Van Langenhove, *supra* n. 3.

Though often used interchangeably in the literature, CD and international cultural relations (ICR) are not synonymous. They reflect two ends of a complicated spectrum of activity. Like the concept of soft power, they too suffer from increasing exposure. The CD-ICR spectrum of activity ranges from heritage protection through to language, ideas, beliefs and the support of cross-national teaching and research and education in the humanities, social sciences as well as natural sciences. Cultural property and practices have both material and politico-strategic value and can serve as mediums for CD.

The last few years have seen a dramatic growth of interest in ICR and CD in Brussels. There are five key milestones in this process to date: (1) the publication in 2014 of the Preparatory Action Report on Culture in EU External Relations, Engaging the World: Towards Global Cultural Citizenship;<sup>12</sup> (2) the delivery in June 2016 by HR Federica Mogherini of the Joint Communication, Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations;<sup>13</sup> (3) the inclusion of CD as an instrument of policy in the 2016 Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy;<sup>14</sup> (4) the adoption by the Council in May 2017 of a mandate for an EU strategy for ICR;<sup>15</sup> and (5) the establishment of a Friends of the Presidency Group to steer policy in this area. Mogherini sees CD as an integral part of a common EU foreign policy, and recognizes how education and research are related to the concept:

Culture ... spans a wide range of policies and activities, from inter-cultural dialogue to tourism, from education and research to the creative industries, from protecting heritage to promoting creative industries and new technologies, and from artisanship to development cooperation.<sup>16</sup>

She has gone as far as describing Europe as a 'cultural superpower'.<sup>17</sup> Yet this rhetorical flourish belies a relatively modest rush to practical activity reflecting both the absence of a major injection of resources by the Commission and the extent to which Brussels

<sup>12</sup> EU, *Preparatory Action Report on Culture in EU External Relations Engaging the World: Towards Global Cultural Citizenship* (2014), [http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/publications/global-cultural-citizenship\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/publications/global-cultural-citizenship_en.pdf) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>13</sup> EC, *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations* (8 June 2016), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0029&from=EN> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>14</sup> EU, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (June 2016), [https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/pages/files/eugs\\_review\\_web\\_13.pdf](https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/pages/files/eugs_review_web_13.pdf) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>15</sup> Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on an EU Strategic Approach to International Cultural Relations* (24 May 2017), <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9635-2017-INIT/en/pdf> (accessed 2018).

<sup>16</sup> EC, *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations* (8 June 2016), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52016JC0029&from=EN> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>17</sup> Eunews, *Mogherini: Europe Is a Cultural Superpower. We Need To Use Its Force* (10 June 2016), <http://www.eunews.it/2016/06/10/mogherini-europe-cultural-superpower-need-use-force/61145> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

collective thinking about CD is still in its infancy, notwithstanding recent useful interventions to take things forward.<sup>18</sup> Education and science more often than not are listed as part of CD, although the EC funded Cultural Diplomacy Platform does not.

The Preparatory Action Report on the role of culture in the EU's external relations<sup>19</sup> stressed the salience for the EU of mutual learning in what it calls 'global cultural citizenship'. The Report recognized the role of private-sector actors, notably philanthropic organizations, corporate sponsors and private higher education providers, and cultural relations' ... huge potential for enhancing European influence and attraction'.<sup>20</sup> Culture, says the Report '... has entered the heart of international relations thinking as a major public policy issue'.<sup>21</sup> While this may be so, in geopolitical terms North America is not the lead area of interest for advocates of European CD or educational exchanges. Higher education is not listed as a main cooperation area between the EU and the US.<sup>22</sup> Rather, the EU Global Strategy focuses on the European neighbourhood and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) regions.<sup>23</sup> Similarly for the US, the Transatlantic is nowadays less salient than the Asia Pacific.

Another constraint for the EU in its aspirations to become a 'cultural super-power' – and by extension a global player in higher education – is that formal competence for culture and (higher) education lies with the Member States.<sup>24</sup> At the same time the working assumption underpinning most analysis of ICR is that they will always be (1) largely organic and bottom up forms of activity and (2) that this activity is invariably sector-specific. Indeed, cultural activity and organization long ago escaped the boundaries of the state and are serious elements of the contemporary transnational and trans-continental diplomatic conversation. But while culture belongs to all levels of society and to all individuals, HE is more often steered by universities and governmental actors.

Moreover, interactions in HE do not always qualify as CD. Collaboration in HE does not automatically contribute to a nation's soft power. More often than not, HE collaboration is issue-specific, problem-solving research between

<sup>18</sup> See Cultural Diplomacy Platform, *Introductory Article: International Cultural Relations in Practice* (Brussels 23 Mar. 2018).

<sup>19</sup> EU, *Preparatory Action Report on Culture in EU External Relations Engaging the World: Towards Global Cultural Citizenship* (2014), [http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/publications/global-cultural-citizenship\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/publications/global-cultural-citizenship_en.pdf) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, at 13.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, at 18.

<sup>22</sup> Delegation of the EU to the United States, *EU-US Relations* (6 Sept. 2017), [https://ec.europa.eu/delegations/united-states-america/27291/united-states-and-eu\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/delegations/united-states-america/27291/united-states-and-eu_en) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>23</sup> EU, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (June 2016), [https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/pages/files/eugs\\_review\\_web\\_13.pdf](https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/pages/files/eugs_review_web_13.pdf) (accessed 2018).

<sup>24</sup> EUR-Lex, *ex Article 6 TEU*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016M006>.

scientists – and not the enhancement of some strategic state interest. However, in the broader cultural policy domain, it is clear from a reading of the 2016 Global Strategy that the enhancement of ICR is part of a wider EU vision for a more effective external policy. This could be the case for student training or faculty exchange when sponsored by the state. Moreover, many programmes and foundations are clearly aimed at enhancing the soft power of their sponsors.

So, while ICR/CD is driven by the quest for an enhancement of EU global engagement and influence, this is not the driving motive of EU higher education institutions in transatlantic relations. While collaboration is part of the wider dynamic of the globalization momentum, so is competition. Moreover, globalization can be rolled back. We see pressures to roll back trade openness and the erection of barriers to foreigners grow.<sup>25</sup>

As part four will argue, this resistance is also beginning to show in HE. Educational exchange is increasingly under threat in this populist era stressing the virtues of nativism, identitarianism, nationalism and protectionism.<sup>26</sup> But first, the following section will provide an historical-cum-empirical description of one core element of the transatlantic HE relationship to give a flavour of the depth and richness of that relationship overtime. Its discussion of the development of American studies in Europe and European studies in the USA can be seen as an early cycle in our rhythmical argument.

### 3 THE TRANSATLANTIC HE RELATIONSHIP: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES IN A SOFT POWER CONTEXT

The history of the development of American studies in Europe is a significant example of CD and two-way soft power in action in the post-World War II period. Where we see a ‘rhythm’, Scott-Smith<sup>27</sup> similarly sees stages. In Europe, as early as 1947, the Salzburg Seminar acted as the incubator for the development of an understanding of America that was acceptable to the US government and thus able to garner financial support. The Seminar nurtured the relationship between national European scholarly communities and its US counterparts. So influential was the Seminar that it was referred to by one senior figure at the time as the ‘Marshall Plan for the Mind’.<sup>28</sup> Where the Marshall plan was geared to *transmission*

<sup>25</sup> R. Higgott, *Globalism, Populism and the Limits to Global Economic Governance*, 1(1) J. Inter-Regional Stud. 2–23 (2018).

<sup>26</sup> C. Mudde, & C. Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press 2017); J. W. Muller, *What is Populism?* (University of Pennsylvania Press 2016).

<sup>27</sup> G. Scott-Smith, *The Ties that Bind: Dutch-American Relations, US Public Diplomacy and the Promotion of American Studies since the Second World War*, 2 Hague J. Dipl. 283–305 (2007).

<sup>28</sup> Cited in R. Fisher, *United States of America Country Report*, Preparatory Action ‘Culture in EU External Relations’ (2014).



to Europe (of material support), Salzburg was geared to *engagement with* Europe. In doing so, it laid the groundwork for the creation of the European Association for American Studies (EAAS) in 1954. Initially the EAAS was a 'self-co-opting aristocracy of European national scholarly elites of American studies',<sup>29</sup> although it quickly became a confederation made up of national associations connecting Americanists across Europe, which is still its task today.

This was quickly followed by the establishment of the John F. Kennedy Institute of North American Studies<sup>30</sup> in Berlin (JFKI) in 1963, which for many years was the most significant single institution in Europe looking at Transatlantic studies. Kicked off by a small grant from the Ford Foundation and with an initial focus largely on American literature, it had a slow growth in the first half of the 1950s. Like Salzburg, it can be seen as an example of soft power with the Ford Foundation acting as 'a private state department of a public CIA'.<sup>31</sup> Following an extremely positive decade, the JFKI became a victim of the increasing radicalization of the German student community from the mid-1960s. Growing hostility to the United States, especially as the involvement in Vietnam escalated, made the JFKI a favourite target of the Berlin left. However, it always remained active and revived, with – in 2017 – 700 students enrolled in its programmes in North American studies.<sup>32</sup>

In the US, on the other hand, European and East European (Russian) Studies had also gained momentum in the decennia after WWII. An example is how Harvard University founded the Center for European Studies in 1968 under the impetus of Stanley Hoffman, with support from the Ford Foundation and the Volkswagen Foundation in Germany.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the US too has its own association, the European Union Studies Association of the United States (EUSA). The Association facilitates research and collaboration projects among the EUSA members and encourages links with individual Europeans.<sup>34</sup> In a recent interesting initiative in reaction to President Trump's negative position towards the EU ('a flawed construct') and NATO ('obsolete and no guarantee of US's security') the Association gathered leading Transatlantic researchers to underline how important cooperation between the EU and the US is.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> This discussion is taken from Ali Fisher's (2013) excellent monograph on transnational networks in the development of American studies in Europe.

<sup>31</sup> O. Schmidt, *Small Atlantic World: US Philanthropy and the Expanding International Exchange of Scholars after 1945*, in *Cultural and International History* 115–34 (J. Gienow-Hecht & F. Schumacher eds, Berghahn Books 2004). Cited in Fisher, *supra* n. 28.

<sup>32</sup> JFKI, *About Us*, <http://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/en/information/index.html> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>33</sup> CES, *History*, <https://ces.fas.harvard.edu/about-us/history> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>34</sup> EUSA, *Constitution of the European Union Studies Association of the United States*, <https://www.eustudies.org/about/constitution> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>35</sup> EUSA, *Benefits of the EU-US Relationship*, <https://www.eustudies.org/eusa-forum/benefits-eu-us-relationship> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).



In Europe, national associations for American studies soon followed the inauguration of EEAS. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Amerikastudien (DGfA/GAAS), founded 1953, currently counts more than thousand members. The British association was established in 1955.<sup>36</sup> BAAS organizes annual conferences, provides some research funding and supports student exchanges. In May 2017, it organized a conference at University College Dublin entitled 'Trump's America'.<sup>37</sup> Conference topics reflected an ironic approach to the analysis of the Trump regime one suspects it would be difficult to find organized in a mainstream US university.

Another important programme that initiated US-EU educational exchanges is the Fulbright Program. Named after the former chair of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator William J. Fulbright, this programme is supported by both the US government and national governments in their respective bi-national partnerships. It enables US scholars and students (from PhD to senior scholars) to go abroad, and accepts foreign scholars and students to the United States in all areas of scholarly and educational endeavour.<sup>38</sup> It operates with 160 partner country programs, and annually grants more than three thousand awards to the US.<sup>39</sup>

Fulbright operates in all EU countries.<sup>40</sup> In addition to its country programs, it also has an EU-wide scheme called the 'Fulbright-Schuman programme', which provides the Fulbright-Schuman innovation grants designed to support a 'better transatlantic understanding of issues at the heart of the US-EU relationship, particularly at the intersection of policy and technology' and is financially supported through private-sector actors.<sup>41</sup> One particular grant provided by the EU for US citizens is the 'Fulbright Schuman Chair', which rotates between the College of Europe, Bruges, and the European University Institute (EUI), Florence.<sup>42</sup> The message emanating from the discussion in part two is that there is a breadth and depth to the transatlantic relationship in HE that has been both organically and institutionally formed overtime. The next section looks at the relationship in its current context.

<sup>36</sup> BAAS, *About Us*, <http://www.baas.ac.uk/about-us/> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>37</sup> BAAS, *CFP: Trump's America* (10 Mar. 2017), <http://www.baas.ac.uk/project/cfp-trumps-america-10-march-2017/> (accessed 4 Feb. 2019).

<sup>38</sup> Fulbright Program, *About Senator J. William Fulbright*, <https://www.cies.org/about-us/about-senator-j-william-fulbright> (accessed 2018).

<sup>39</sup> Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Facts and Figures*, <https://eca.state.gov/impact/facts-and-figures> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>40</sup> Fulbright Commission, *About Us*, <http://www.fulbright.be/about-us/about-us/> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4 CURRENT TRANSATLANTIC HE ACTIVITIES

No two other regions in the world are as deeply integrated as the US and Europe. 2015 data showed they represent 46.2% of global GDP and provide each other with 15 million jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. US companies located in Europe directly provide 4.7 million jobs, and US-based European companies account for 4.3 million jobs. Europeans and Americans are responsible for half of total global consumption.<sup>43</sup> In terms of enrolments in HE, European and American rates are ahead of the global curve. By 2016, 40% of the people in the EU had attained a tertiary degree<sup>44</sup> (at least bachelor's degree), and 36% of Americans.<sup>45</sup>

The most obvious difference in transatlantic HE is that European tertiary institutions are primarily state run and funded (albeit with some of the major UK institutions relying increasingly less on state funding). Private universities are not normally to be found in European Member States, with the exception of Business Schools and US campuses abroad scattered throughout Europe. In many countries of continental Europe, both private HE institutions and high tuition fees are still frowned upon. By contrast, many universities, especially those dating from the first two centuries of US history, are privately founded and funded. Another major difference lies in student specialization that tends to be continuous from undergraduate to postgraduate education in Europe. Tertiary education in the US is much more flexible and graduate education in the US tends to be much more discrete. Europeans focus much more on achievement in a chosen field at even the undergraduate level. In the US, students change subjects frequently during an undergraduate career before specializing at the graduate level.<sup>46</sup>

There is however a gradual process of emulation taking place in Europe where the hope is that the best European universities can compete and cooperate with the best US universities. However, the very best US universities are private and essentially market competitors for the best students, research funding and indeed faculty attracted by competitive salaries. With the exception of the top 15–20 universities in the UK and the private business schools in major European cities, competition in any of these domains is not at the soul of the continental European university experience. In the absence of a culture of institutional competition, the

<sup>43</sup> Center for Transatlantic Relations, *The Transatlantic Economy 2018, Key Findings*, <https://archive.transatlanticrelations.org/publication/the-transatlantic-economy-2018/> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>44</sup> Eurostat, *Educational Attainment Statistics*, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Educational\\_attainment\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Educational_attainment_statistics) (accessed 17 Apr. 2019).

<sup>45</sup> NCES, *Fast Facts: Educational Attainment*, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=27> (accessed 17 Apr. 2019).

<sup>46</sup> A. R. Spencer, *Secondary and Higher Education in Europe and the United States*, in *Transatlantic Relations: A European Perspective*, 118–24 (Regent's University London 2014).

prospects of national university *systems* (as opposed to individual elite universities) competing globally seems problematic to say the least.

#### 4.1 STUDENT MOVEMENT

Broad differences notwithstanding, the EU is a popular study destination for Americans. The EU annually hosts over half of all Americans studying abroad, which is currently more than 170,000 Americans per year. Informal websites are great advocates of US students studying in Europe because of the lower/free tuition fees and the lower costs of living, even without a scholarship.<sup>47</sup> The top five destination countries for American students consisted exclusively of European countries, with the UK and Germany ranking highest. Six other European countries are represented in the top twenty. But whilst European countries are top destinations for American students, the opposite is not true. Only 66,000 Europeans went to study in the US in 2016.<sup>48</sup> For the 2017–2018 academic year, this number stagnated. Reflecting the size of the US market not a single European country is represented in the top ten places of origin for foreign students in the United States. The UK holds the 14th place, with 1.1% of all foreign students going to the US, followed by Germany (16th), France (18th) and Spain (24th).<sup>49</sup> The total number of European students stemming from these countries going to the US stagnated for 2017–2018.<sup>50</sup> The top countries from where students go to the US are all located in Asia.

Significantly, both the UK and the US have seen their numbers of foreign student enrolments dropping. Less continental European students were enrolled in British and US universities, with students from the Middle East especially looking for new study destinations rather than choosing the US.<sup>51</sup> Data for 2016 and 2017 shows the US losing a 3.8% share of the total international student community going abroad in just that one year. The UK lost 2.4% for the same time period. For the subsequent academic year of 2017–2018, it was reported that the roster of new international students going to the US fell with 6% for that year as well.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> H. Scarr, *8 Countries Where US Students Can Study for Free in Europe* (13 June 2016), <https://www.student.com/articles/countries-american-students-study-free-europe/> (accessed 2018).

<sup>48</sup> IIE, *Open Doors Infographics 2017*, <https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Fact-Sheets-and-Infographics/Infographics> (accessed 2018).

<sup>49</sup> IIE, *Open Doors Report 2017*, <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Open-Doors-2017-Media-Information> (accessed 2018).

<sup>50</sup> IIE, *Data by Region Factsheets*, file:///C:/Users/Administrator/Downloads/Open-Doors-2018-Europe.pdf (accessed 17 Apr. 2019).

<sup>51</sup> Asia Times, *Foreign Students Cool on US, UK After Trump, Brexit: Report* (9 July 2017), <http://www.atimes.com/article/foreign-students-cool-us-uk-trump-brexite-report/> (accessed 2018).

<sup>52</sup> *What's the Trump Effect on International Enrollment?*, Washington Post (12 Nov. 2018), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/report-finds-new-foreign-students-are-dwindling-renewing-questions-about-possible-trump-effect-on-enrollment/2018/11/12/7b1bac92-e68b-11e8-a939-9469f1166f9d\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.e47cda84e12d](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/report-finds-new-foreign-students-are-dwindling-renewing-questions-about-possible-trump-effect-on-enrollment/2018/11/12/7b1bac92-e68b-11e8-a939-9469f1166f9d_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.e47cda84e12d) (accessed 17 Apr. 2019).

If we only look at European postgraduate demand these numbers declined even more: the UK lost 5.1% and the US lost 6% respectively of European postgraduate students in just one academic year time (registrations in 2015 *v.* in 2016).<sup>53</sup> This displacement has caused Ireland and Canada's foreign student numbers increasing. While evidence of this recent decline of interest in studying in the US and UK mounts,<sup>54</sup> it is too early to confirm the trend. Nevertheless, given the contemporary populism and objections to the international movement of peoples, this decline may pose a real challenge for US and UK higher education for the foreseeable future.

#### 4.2 EXCHANGES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

There is a high degree of traffic across the Atlantic generated by the EU, foundations, exchange programs, membership organizations that has been influential in HE. The major EU input into transatlantic HE relations is the Erasmus+ program. This is so for both numbers of people moved and the absolute volume of funding involved. Erasmus+ is for both EU and non-EU citizens and while US citizens benefit, they are but one state among many in a wider program. The entire Erasmus+ budget for 2014–20 is 16.3 billion EUR, offering more than 4 million mobility opportunities of which approximately 2 million are students in HE.<sup>55</sup>

Concerning the range and size of Erasmus actions aimed specifically at the US, in 2016, actions included support for five Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's degree students to go to the US (out of a total of 150 worldwide; four organizations were involved in Transatlantic 'youth: capacity building projects';) and of the fourteen Jean Monnet applications, eight projects received funding support and a further ten organizations were involved in transatlantic activity. Funding was not overwhelming, with around half a million euro in support.<sup>56</sup> In 2017, Erasmus+ spent 4.3 million dollar to support 578 Americans to study in the EU and 485 Europeans to study in the US. In addition, forty-four Americans received a scholarship to undertake one of the Joint Master's Degree programs.<sup>57</sup> Even though a number

<sup>53</sup> Hotcourses Insights, *Brexit Report: How Has Global Demand for Higher Education Shifted Over the Last 12 Months?*, <https://21tqmu3jseyp1msxha2oh5wz-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Brexit-report-June-2017.pdf> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>54</sup> Asia Times, *supra* n. 51.

<sup>55</sup> EC, *Erasmus + Annual Report 2016* (EU Publications 18 Jan. 2018), <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b0250d33-fcce-11e7-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018); EC, *Erasmus + Key Figures*, [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/key-figures\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/key-figures_en) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>56</sup> EC, *Erasmus + Annual Report 2016 Statistical Annex* (2017), [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/annual-report-2016-stat-annex\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/annual-report-2016-stat-annex_en.pdf) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>57</sup> T. Rivera, *The EU & Education – Looking to the Future* (22 Nov. 2017), <https://medium.com/euintheus/the-eu-education-looking-to-the-future-bb04b92dec70> (accessed 2018).

of US and EU students were enabled to study through this programme, transatlantic HE flows are not high on the Erasmus+ priority list.

Important to mention are also the twelve Jean Monnet EU Centres of Excellence in the US that receive funding via the EU Delegation in Washington.<sup>58</sup> These Centres play an important role in promoting the study of the EU in the US as well as in enhancing transatlantic ties through HE-related activities. Another significant EU activity are the transatlantic Marie Curie actions for both Canada and the US. Between 2007 and 2014, 1367 American researchers were funded by such actions.<sup>59</sup>

Not all activities promoting transatlantic HE have been sustainable. For example, the EU-USA Atlantis Programme initiated in 1995 proved to be short-lived. Between 1996 and 2005, agreements to the value of 13 million euro were set up with the US, and 7.8 million euro with Canada in order to establish a series of consortia and support exchanges for students and faculty. EU funding for the second stage (2006–13) was set to 45 million euro for excellence mobility projects, policy-oriented actions and joint transatlantic degrees. However, the third stage in 2013 was abolished when US (and Canadian) governments cut their funding and the EU declined to proceed without matching funding.<sup>60</sup> The official US line was that the Programme's results had been achieved – an opinion not shared in Brussels. Unofficially, EU policy-makers believed that Obama's 'pivot to Asia' had seen US funding reassigned from Europe to Asia.<sup>61</sup>

While one can plausibly assume that the actions identified above can have beneficial effects on European presence and standing in the US. Moreover, it is further complicated by the fact that much transatlantic HE activity takes place not via the EU per se, but by the initiatives (some long standing) of the Member States. Government funded organizations such as the British Council, the Goethe Foundation, the German Marshall Fund of the US (GMF) and the Alliance Française have long histories of supporting HE exchanges.

To illustrate this, nearly 25,000 French and American students have participated in study abroad programs in 2016. While many of these were independently generated exchanges by the individuals concerned, others were more institutional or state-organized through bodies such as *Campus France*, a service of the French

<sup>58</sup> EACEA, *Directory Search*, <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/JeanMonnetDirectory/#/search-screen/> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>59</sup> EC, *FP7 Marie Curie Actions, Country Fact Sheet: United States* (31 Oct. 2016), [https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/msca/funded-projects/statistics/non-eu/marie-curie-actions-country-fiche-us\\_en.pdf?country=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fassets%2Fec%2Fmsca%2Ffunded-projects%2Fstatistics%2Fnon-eu%2Fmarie-curie-actions-country-fiche-us\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/msca/funded-projects/statistics/non-eu/marie-curie-actions-country-fiche-us_en.pdf?country=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fassets%2Fec%2Fmsca%2Ffunded-projects%2Fstatistics%2Fnon-eu%2Fmarie-curie-actions-country-fiche-us_en.pdf) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>60</sup> EACEA, *Bilateral Cooperation in the Field of Higher Education, About EU-USA Atlantis Programme*, [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/2007-2013/eu-us-atlantis-programme\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/2007-2013/eu-us-atlantis-programme_en) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>61</sup> Explanation offered by a senior official in DG EAC.

Embassy that promotes studying in France to American students.<sup>62</sup> These high numbers should come as no surprise as French-American HE initiatives got a boost after the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the US State Department signed the Transatlantic Friendship and Mobility Initiative in 2014. The goal was to 'double the number of US students going to France and the number of French students coming to the United States by 2025'.<sup>63</sup> A further example of HE funding is the Chateaubriand Fellowship (since 1981), a grant offered by the Embassy of France in the United States to support outstanding Ph.D. students from American universities who wish to undertake a period of sustained research in France. More than sixty students receive a grant each year.<sup>64</sup>

Germany's bilateral relationships with the US operate under a range of schemes such as the Marshall Memorial Fellowship (MMF). Created in 1982 to introduce a new generation of European leaders to the United States, it now prepares leaders from both sides of the Atlantic for transatlantic relations. While not exclusively a higher education initiative, the GMF awards seventy-five Marshall Memorial Fellowships each year to candidates from business, government and civil society and the universities.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) as the most important state organization offers scholarship opportunities which are funded by the German Federal government and other institutes and actors. American students can apply for twenty-seven different DAAD scholarship programmes, and for ninety-three programmes in total.<sup>66</sup>

Italy also offers scholarship programmes to US students, often linked with a requirement to be an American citizen of Italian ancestry. Specifically, the Italian American Foundation grants scholarships to 'Italian Americans' (possessing at least one Italian ancestor) who are citizens of the US. Sixty to seventy scholarships are awarded each year.<sup>67</sup> Poland operates a scheme with similar principles as Italy, and funds American students of Polish ancestry.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Campus France, *Study in France*, <http://www.usa.campusfrance.org/en/rubrique/studyinfrance> (accessed 2018).

<sup>63</sup> American Council on Education, *Internationalizing US Higher Education*, <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Current-Policies-Future-Directions-Part-2-US.pdf> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>64</sup> Chateaubriand Fellowship Program, *About the Chateaubriand Fellowship Program*, <https://www.chateaubriand-fellowship.org> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>65</sup> The German Marshall Fund of the United States, *Marshall Memorial Fellowship*, <http://www.gmfus.org/transatlantic-leadership-initiatives/marshall-memorial-fellowship> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>66</sup> DAAD, *Finding Scholarships*, <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/datenbank/en/21148-scholarship-database/?status=&origin=44&subjectGrps=&daad=&q=&page=1&back=1> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>67</sup> The National Italian American Foundation, *Scholarships Overview*, <http://www.niaf.org/programs/scholarships-overview/> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>68</sup> Polish American Congress, *Scholarships for Polish-American Students*, <http://www.pac1944.org/students/scholarships.htm> (accessed 2018); The Kosciuszko Foundation, *Exchange Programs to Poland*, <https://www.thekf.org/kf/scholarships/exchange-poland/> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

The data and the narrative suggest that the HE relationships across the Atlantic are in many instances deep, especially at the state-to-state level, but increasingly also at the EU-to-US level, although there are constraints on greater growth. Three are worth identifying. The first is that the US, reflected by Erasmus, is not really a priority in the wider strategy of the EU in international education. The second, inevitably, is funding. Some initiatives have foundered (or nearly foundered in the case of Fulbright) on the altar of budget cuts. The third issue, and the most difficult to analyse is that of *context*. HE relations between the US and Europe do not operate in a vacuum isolated from the wider rhythms of transatlantic relations. This issue is addressed in the next section.

## 5 THE RHYTHMS OF SOFT POWER: HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ATLANTIC SPACE AND FOREIGN POLICY IN THE AGE OF DONALD TRUMP

The discussion of transatlantic higher education in parts two and three has largely been conducted in isolation from its wider political context. It was conducted in this unencumbered fashion in order to give a sense of breadth and depth to the transatlantic relationship in HE in its own right. Part 4 rectifies this omission by looking at the wider political context in which an understanding of the contemporary relationship must be understood. It addresses the issue of soft power in both a historical and contemporary context to enforce our argument that HE is subject to the wider rhythms of international relations and soft power diplomacy in particular.

It is the very essence of (state-based) soft power that it is deployed to promote a positive image of its user. In that respect, US funding support for academic exchange has never been disinterested. Cultural diplomacy, academic scholarship and US foundations have always been used for creating and promoting positive images of the US.<sup>69</sup> The degree of US governmental institutional desire to shape and use academic knowledge and personnel has varied over time and place depending on US interests at that time. The height of such intervention was during the Cold War, when US soft power in Europe was an important part of its strategy towards the Soviet Union. During that period US diplomacy was very much diplomacy of the traditional ‘eyes and ears’, ‘government mouthpiece’, ‘signalling’ variety and an extension of both superpower politics and intelligence gathering and propaganda. But CD was also important, as it was about ‘winning the hearts and minds of the people’.

<sup>69</sup> I. Parmar, *Combating Anti-Americanism: American Foundations and Public Diplomacy*, in *The Political Consequences of Anti-Americanism* (R. Higgott & I. Malbasic, Routledge 2008).



The knowledge of Western, especially US material culture and consumption patterns beamed into Europe and through the Iron Curtain, which undermined the Soviet project as much as the nuclear arms race.<sup>70</sup> Cultural diplomacy, facilitated by the technological innovations of the time (radio and television), reached out to Soviet and Eastern European citizens in that period. In the twenty-first century the internet and social media have replaced TV and radio as the principal means of communication. As a consequence, the representation of truth is now much more susceptible to distortion.

The Cold War period of course had its own style of 'fake news'. In the HE sector this saw covert and clandestine engagement of researchers and lecturers in a number of ways, often unbeknownst to the researchers themselves. The most celebrated example was the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) that over its lifetime engaged hundreds of academics in its various activities. There is little doubt that the CCF, an anti-Communist advocacy group founded in 1950 and largely funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was an important vehicle for US soft power and CD in the Cold War era. It played an important role in the Cold War ideas battle by supporting what Coleman called the 'struggle for the mind of Post-War Europe'.<sup>71</sup> It did so by funding many activities in transatlantic HE exchange, especially underwriting (financially but anonymously) many otherwise respectable scholarly publications such as *Encounter*, *Preuves*, *Minerva* and *the China Quarterly*. As Saunders noted: 'Whether they liked it or not, whether they knew it or not, there were few writers, poets, artists, historians, scientists, or critics in post-war Europe whose names were not in some way linked to this covert enterprise'.<sup>72</sup>

To this day the desire of government agencies to influence culture/public intellectual activity still takes place, although not to the same degree as during the Cold War. In Cold War contexts such a pattern of behaviour was understandable but is less appropriate today, although it is not unknown for official financial support to be refused to those who might be critical of government policy.<sup>73</sup> The interesting question for this article is the degree to which knowledge of these crude, rather than successful, interventions in soft power diplomacy might, in the

<sup>70</sup> E. Skolnikoff, *The Elusive Transformation: Science, Technology and the Evolution of International Politics* (Princeton University Press 1993); N. Guillhot, *Americanism and Its Critics: From the Congress of Cultural Freedom to the Open Society Institute*, in Higgott & Malbasic, *supra* n. 69.

<sup>71</sup> P. Coleman, *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Postwar Europe* (The Free Press 1989).

<sup>72</sup> F. S. Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War* (The New Press 1999).

<sup>73</sup> From the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, one of the authors was a senior office holder of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. During that time, at least six of the many nominations he made on behalf of the AIIA for speakers to tour Australia were rejected on the grounds of the nominees' politics not being amenable to the then US administration.

contemporary era, have the alternative effect of exacerbating anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism is often not far below the surface in European scholarly and public intellectual communities.

Anti-Americanism is a confused and confusing concept, but it has been and indeed still can be an implicit (and for some an explicit) issue in the transatlantic relationship. The concept is invariably driven by emotion rather than intellect. Nevertheless, it casts a long policy shadow with adverse consequences (both real and potential). Ideas matter: they shape actions and have policy consequences. The current era risks the prospect of a resurgence of anti-Americanism in this time of challenge for the liberal order. To the extent that we are seeing the international growth of anti-American sentiment it is explained well in the words of the late (and increasingly lionized) Zbigniew Brezinski.

Brezinski sees the failure of the US to consolidate its post-Cold War material and cultural hegemony over the international order as the great US 'lost opportunity'. For him, the immature use and abuse of hegemony by the US from the end of the Cold War was the source of its own declining soft power. Anti-Americanism has been 'an integral part of the shifting global demographic, political and economic balance'.<sup>74</sup> Of course, Brezinski was not alone in this judgment and we would be remiss if we did not recognize a post-World War II tradition of anti-Americanism in continental Europe, especially from the 1960s.<sup>75</sup>

Much anti-Americanism fails to distinguish between what America *does* and what America *is*. Or as Stonor Saunders has said, we need to differentiate between the 'idea of the United States and the practice of the United States'. It is here that the transatlantic scholarly community is or should be an important constraint on this conflation in the current era. While we should ignore the simply prejudicial quality of much anti-Americanism,<sup>76</sup> critical analysis of US policy should be acceptable. Now, in an age when transatlantic relations are more strained than at any time since the end of WWII, it is time for constructive critique of a US adrift. The transatlantic HE community has a major role to play here. Universities, as well as foundations, the film sector and other sources of communication are becoming increasingly important in the information age when transatlantic data flows are the most intense in the world.<sup>77</sup> They have a role to play in the relation between the US and the EU.

<sup>74</sup> Z. Brezinski, *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower* (Basic Books 2007).

<sup>75</sup> Higgott & Malbasic, *supra* n. 69.

<sup>76</sup> A. Markovits, *European anti Americanism (and Anti-Semitism): Ever Present though Always Denied*, University of Pittsburgh, Working Article 108 (Center for European Studies 2003), <http://aei.pitt.edu/9130/1/Markovits.pdf>.

<sup>77</sup> Center for Transatlantic Relations, *The Transatlantic Economy 2018, Key Findings*, [http://www.amcha-meu.eu/sites/default/files/key\\_findings.pdf](http://www.amcha-meu.eu/sites/default/files/key_findings.pdf) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

## 6 CONCLUSION

The article has argued that soft power moves in rhythms and cycles conditioned by the political temper of the times. HE is not immune to these rhythms. As we noted in part two, early positive Cold War conditions in transatlantic relations actually assisted US soft power initiatives in the development of American and European Studies in the respective transatlantic university sectors. In the current era, although it is too early to confirm a trend, the less positive atmosphere of transatlantic relations seems to be having an adverse effect on exchanges and student numbers. Transatlantic student enrolments seem to be succumbing to the prevailing negative socio-political dynamics of contemporary populism and nationalism and especially the combative, transactional 'America First' rhetoric and practice. The current relationship between Europe and the US is fraught with difficulty. At the broadest level we are seeing the weakening of Karl Deutsch's (1957) North Atlantic Community.<sup>78</sup> The current era therefore marks a sharp contrast in US soft power fortunes when contrasted with the heady days between the end of WW II and the end of the Cold War.

Recent *Portland Soft Power Rankings* (2016 and 2017) show the US dropping from first to third place (behind France and the UK) in the list of the world's leading soft power states. This can perhaps be seen as part of a longer trend.<sup>79</sup> As early as October 2003 – fifteen years ago – a majority (52%) of Europeans felt the US was a negative factor in the prospects for global peace with support for it slipping even further by 2006.<sup>80</sup> Anti-American rhetoric in Europe has continued to grow since that time and while it may have exacerbated since the arrival of Donald Trump, the trend cannot be attributed simply to his quixotic behaviour. US soft power is however clearly under considerable challenge at this time. It is thus of no surprise that this challenge will be reflected in transatlantic HE relations.

Through this lens we saw how soft power and HE relations effectively mirror the ebb and flow – the rhythms – in the standing of the US in global affairs. Following an admittedly somewhat circular logic, US soft power is at its most effective when US standing is high. Its soft power would appear to diminish as its standing in world affairs comes under challenge. The contrast in the context of transatlantic HE is between the years of the Cold War and the contemporary era. US soft power in HE was at its strongest in the years of the Cold War when its

<sup>78</sup> K. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organisation in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton University Press 1957).

<sup>79</sup> Portland, *The Soft Power 30, a Global Ranking of Soft Power 2016*, <https://portland-communications.com/pdf/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2016.pdf>, (accessed 15 Oct. 2018); Portland, *The Soft Power 30, a Global Ranking of Soft Power 2017*, <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2017-Web-1.pdf> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

<sup>80</sup> Pew, *US Image Suffers as Publics Around the World Question Trumps Leadership* (23 June 2017), [http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-image-suffers-as-publics-around-world-question-trumps-leadership/pg\\_2017-06-26-us\\_image-01-5/](http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-image-suffers-as-publics-around-world-question-trumps-leadership/pg_2017-06-26-us_image-01-5/) (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

standing in Europe was high. Through deft CD in one era it was able to bolster educational relationships and to advance American studies. In the contemporary era, notable for its absence of deft diplomacy, the transatlantic higher educational relationship appears to reflect the declining standing of the US as a global soft power actor in the contemporary liberal order.

However, soft power may only be a secondary variable in the challenges to the existing liberal order. The bigger issues are (1) *economic* (especially the backlash against globalization and economic openness); (2) *political* (the rise of populism and nationalism in international relations with all its attendant complications for global order) and (3) *contemporary US behaviour*. The US seems intent on addressing the major political and economic problems in a largely unilateral and transactionalist manner as opposed to the more cooperative, multilateral collective action problem-solving approach that prevailed for much of the second half of the twentieth century. As is well known, and extensively commented upon by agencies such as the Pew Foundation, this has had consequences for how US soft power and its subsequent global standing is viewed. This is of course not simply a problem for the US. It casts massive policy shadows over how other states behave. From a European perspective, this is particularly challenging given the traditionally close nature of the transatlantic relationship on the one hand and the current importance the EU attaches to its ability to be a major soft power actor on the other.

It is therefore prudential to think about this HE relationship in the wider context offered in this article. It raises a series of crucial questions for the future of the HE relationship across the Atlantic in both the scientific domain and that of the humanities and social sciences. How they develop will cast important shadows over the future relationship in at least two ways. First, in the scientific domain, the EU is keen on enhancing its cooperative research endeavours and innovation. Universities are central to this endeavour. Yet, it is becoming increasingly clear that the current US administration does not rank cooperative scientific innovations as a high priority.<sup>81</sup> The implications of this for EU international cooperative activity in science innovation and its implications for higher education are only slowly beginning to emerge. Second, the social sciences and the humanities have been the traditional source of transatlantic cross-cultural communication and dialogue. The degree to which this dialogue can resist the wider politicization of the populist age and the degree to which the EU community can mitigate (rather than exacerbate) potential anti-Americanism will be an equally important consideration for the future.

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<sup>81</sup> C. Davenport, *In Trump White House Science Is Unwelcome and so Is Advice* (9 June 2018), <https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/in-trump-white-house-science-is-unwelcome-and-so-is-advice/> (accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

### EFAR's Special Issue 2021 Announcement

As so many special issue proposals are received by the journal, the Board runs a competition where the most suitable proposal is selected from the pool of formal submissions in any one year. In order to consider your proposal, a formal submission must be made and the following sent to the editorial office:

- (1) A document outlining in detail the underlying theme of the special issue and why it is of relevance and importance. This document should also list all likely contributors, a short biographical note on each and the provisional or working title of each paper.
- (2) Four full-length draft papers (6000–8000 words).

This proposal package must be received at the editorial office no later than **15 July 2020**; the final decision will be announced by **15 September 2020**. Publication will occur in the following year.

Please note that all special issues are required to be topical and interdisciplinary in nature (historical themes will not be considered). They must also remain within the space budget of **150 pages (64000 words)**. The deputy editor can help with this assessment.

Finally, please note that the Editors retain the right to refuse publication of any or all articles in an accepted special issue based on the comments of the independent reviewers.

